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Jain Samaj Mourns the Loss of Acharya Mahapragya Ji

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

JAIPUR: Acharya Mahapragya, the 10th Acharya (sage) and supreme head of the Jain Swetambar Terapanth community, died following a cardiac arrest at Sardarshahar in Churu district of Rajasthan on Sunday. He was 90.

Acharya shree was resting in the afternoon at Terapanth Ashram in the town when he suffered a cardiac arrest. His body was cremated on Monday at Sardarshahar—the place where he gained monkhood and where he was staying for the past few days to deliver sermons.

Acharya Mahapragya was born on June 14, 1920 at Tamkor village in Jhunjhunu district. He headed the Jain Vishwa Bharati University at Ladnun and led the Anuvrat movement launched by his mentor and the then head of Swetambar Terapanth, Acharya Tulsi in 1949.

He was a great practitioner of meditation, spirituality, Mantras, Anekaant and non-violence and wrote extensively on these subjects.

As a Jain monk, he always travelled on foot and took five major Mahavratas (vows) as a part of initiation into monkhood at the age of 10.

Acharya Mahapragya was



known for a seven-year-long “Ahimsa Yatra”, which he undertook to highlight the spiritual aspect of non-violence and spread the message of peace and harmony across the country.

He traversed over 10,000 km on foot, covering 2,400 villages, towns and cities, and addressed many public meetings during the yatra. The journey began and ended at Sujangarh in Rajasthan.

Acharyashree, who was consecrated as the 10th Acharya supreme head of Terapanth religious order at a public meeting in Delhi on February 5, 1995, formulated the now famous ‘Preksha’ medi-

tation system, comprising of Yogasana, Pranayama, Mantra and therapy, in 1970s.

Former Indian President S Radhakrishnan had termed Acharya Mahapragya as one of the two fine philosophers of modern India along with Swami Vivekananda.

President Pratibha Patil and Congress chief Sonia

Gandhi on Monday condoled the death of Acharya Mahapragya calling it an “irreparable loss” to the whole of India.

Patil called the 10th Acharya Mahapragya a “great sage and philosopher who gave a new direction to the Anuvrat movement and spread the message of peace and non-violence” across the country.

In a statement, Sonia Gandhi said the passing away of Acharya Mahapragya was not just an incalculable loss for the Jain community but also left a vacuum for Indian society. “He was a thinker of rare caliber, a personality with literary sensitivity, and a social

guide,” she said.

Paying rich tributes to the Jain sage, the Congress chief said, “All his life, he strove to cultivate and propagate those values without which human civilization could not have been imagined.”

Recalling her personal dialogue with him, Sonia Gandhi said Acharya Mahapragya was a symbol of non-violence. Congress leader Abhishek Singhvi termed him a “sage, savant, but above all, a philosopher whose spirituality transcended all religions”.

Acting Governor Shivraj Patil, Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and Assembly Speaker Deependra Singh Shekhawat have condoled the death of Acharya Mahapragya.

Prominent among the awards given to him during his lifetime were the Mother Teresa national award of peace (2005), Union Government’s communal harmony award (2004), Ambassador of Peace Award in London (2003), Lokmaharishi by Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation (2003) and the Indira Gandhi National Integration Award (2002).

Acharya Shreenot only touched but positively influenced the lives of millions of people in India and abroad and will continue to do so for many generations to come through the rich literature, tradition, and practices such as Preksha Meditation that he has left behind.

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